JUL 3 1 1985

Letter from Taizé

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July-August 1985

In the next letter:
Brother Roger's meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations (July 2)

The European Meetings in Taizé

The young and adults who come to Taizé usually stay for a week. Weeklong meetings take place all year round; in the summer from June to September, these are EUROPEAN MEETINGS (in which young people from other continents also take part).

Spending a week in Taizé

The following article was written by a young French woman after spending a week in Taizé.

Christ is risen, alleluia! He is truly risen, alleluia!" How many times did we sing this chant in Taizé? Never before did the meaning of these words strike me so much. Christ is risen, he is alive, fully alive in each of us.

Taizé is a place where meetings and reflection take place between people of different countries, with different life-stories, different religious back-grounds, united by the same desire for brotherly love. While so many families are torn apart, so many countries in crisis, so many religions divided, people are praying from the bottom of their hearts and working for the reconciliation of peoples, for the unity which binds us beyond our differences.

I set off to Taizé hoping to find a taste for prayer and a life of faith there. I really discovered the deep meaning of reconciliation, that living strength of hope which forgiveness is. These are not empty words. They are the means which God has given us so that the world may live in peace and brotherhood.

God left us free to choose. And because we are sinners, he gave us forgiveness. Reconciliation is handed on by every one of us in our daily lives. This is demanding. Sometimes we want to get out of it. But right there where we can only see divergences, God sees his children, and he wants to see them living in peace and love.

Everybody needs to make a little pilgrimage of reconciliation each day, each week, to be able to aspire to a life of fellowship and to a world at peace. It is easier said than done. But when you see so many young people, and not so young, gathered to pray and to meet one another in the same spirit of peace and brotherhood, you cannot give up. You set off with new energy, a strength filled with hope, which was hidden deeply within you to unfold.

Many encounters touched me during my visit. The biblical introductions help to understand God's message. Discussion in groups is enriching. I remember the discussion on the theme of giving one's life". The prayer is simple and warm. There I recovered the taste for prayer. But coming home is more difficult, I miss the chants and the peaceful, silent atmosphere of the church. I also got to know people. The friendship we experienced leaves strong links between us. ▷

The Transfiguration of Jesus (August 6th)

"Eight days after this discussion..." (Lk 9,28). The account of the Transfiguration of Jesus opens with these words. The discussion in question was on the identity of the Son of Man. Jesus explained that he is the one who must suffer, be rejected, put to death and, on the third day, be raised to life (Lk 9,22).

Moses and Elijah, the two important figures of the Old Testament, stand beside the transfigured Jesus. For a contemporary of Christ, Moses is the Law, the first books of the Bible; Elijah, the man who suffered, represents the Prophets. Both of them are discussing the "departure of Jesus that he was going to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem" (Lk 9,31). "Departure", the word used by St. Luke is literally, "exodus", without doubt he is thinking of the passage Jesus will make from this world to the Father, of his passage through death. This passage, this death, this giving of self, are at the heart of Scripture and of Jesus' glory: Moses and Elijah indicate this through their presence, and the Risen Christ will himself explain it to the disciples (Lk 24,26-27 and 44).

According to St. Luke, Jesus was transfigured while praying (Lk 9,29). At the Transfiguration it is his identity as Son turned towards the Father which shines forth. What will take place at Jerusalem is not just an isolated episode in Christ's life. Offering himself, Jesus is faithful to what he always is. Before the creation of the world (Jn 17,24) and "setting out resolutely for Jerusalem" (Lk 9,51), Jesus is the one who gives himself. His life is the act of giving. The intense beauty which shines from the transfigured Jesus, which is the sign of God's presence and which the Bible calls self-giving love. Not impersonal and imposing importance, but the light of a face, dazzling love.

By accepting to enter human death, Jesus takes on the most extreme human weakness. Paradoxically, glory emerges from the place of non-glory, death. And so death is transfigured: it becomes the place of the "greatest love" (Jn 15,13). In Christ's glory there is nothing which rejects our poverty or looks down on it. Mysteriously, it embraces our wretchedness and our misused freedom. His glory is inexpressible closeness. It is solidarity fully wished and desired. At the Transfiguration the glory of "crucified love" shines forth.

During the meetings in Taizé, a brother gives a biblical introduction each day in the various European languages. The big themes of this year are thus approached from the reading of biblical texts, and then deepened in little groups with the help of a few questions. This is the content of the first two days. The themes for the rest of the week will be published later.

An inner life with neither beginning nor end

On the first day of a week in Taizé one reads the first part of the LETTER FROM THE DESERT: "In your darkness...Are you frightened ? I am here."

We do not have to worry ourselves about feeling an emptiness or fullness in us. It is not we who create the life within us, the inner life is given to us, whether we are aware of it or not, and Jesus says to each of us, as he said to the Samaritan woman, "If you knew the gift of God..." (read John 4.7-14).

Jesus compares what he gives to living water which springs from the depths of our being. If we seek it, it is not to keep it in a container and then satisfy ourselves from it. Inner life does not mean being centred on ourselves and our thoughts. It is not an accumulation of knowledge about ourselves, it is in us like life-giving water, which is there to show itself, to spring forth again and it makes us share what we have received.

"If you knew the gift of God..." What is this gift ? First of all it is our life and that what makes us fully alive. In the Gospel this gift is in fact Jesus himself. It is him that God gives us; and Jesus gives himself, without restriction. It is he who is our life in fullness.

Jesus speaks about this fullness of inner life like a "spring welling up to eternal life". This expression makes one think of refreshing water which renews, which enlivens and which restores us to communion with God at each moment. So the inner life is receiving God's forgiveness. This forgiveness of God is given, like a fire within, to wipe away our sins, but above all to make us love like him, with him. This is how our inner life is reawakened: by giving the best of what we have received.

Sometimes we have the impression of being unable to love God or others properly, but that also is given to us: "Hope never disappoints us because the love of God was poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Romans 5.5).

Ezechiel, in the Old Testament, was already announcing the coming of the Spirit of life long before Christ, "The Lord said to me, "Prophesy to the Spirit, prophesy, son of man, and say: come from the four winds, Spirit, breathe on these dead and may they come to life. I prophesied as I was ordered, and the Spirit came into them, they regained life and stood upon their feet, a vast crowd" (Ezechiel 37.9-10). This breath of life given to all is also the source of our communion with one another.

- What is the gift of God for me? How can I discover what Christ has placed in me?
- What renews and refreshes us inwardly so that we can cross the deserts of life?
- How can we give the best of what we have been given? How is this possible amid division and despite the feeling of helplessness?
- Are there people around us who, even in a hidden way, are "signs of what we never dared hope for" ?

Trust of the heart

On the second day of the week one reads the second part of the LETTER FROM THE DESERT: "But, you will say, my work...Fulfillment of your longing."

Trusting does not mean wanting to live as if there were no difficulties, closing our eyes to problems. It has more the meaning of leaning on someone. In the Gospel, Jesus is close to people in difficult situations. He shows his trust in them and in that way it becomes possible for them to trust in return. This way there is an exchange of trust which can develop:

-Luke 5.8-11: Jesus says to Peter who recognises his sin, "Do not fear, from now on you will be a fisher of men." Jesus takes the whole person into account, even with their sin, and he runs the risk of committing himself with Peter and his companions.

-Mark 9.21-25: Jesus says to the father of an epeleptic child who asks that he heal him, "Everything is possible for someone who believes." The father of the child cried out, "I believe, help my little faith." Jesus draws out a greater trust than we would believe ourselves capable of. He sees our trust, even if it seems little to us and even if doubt remains.

Discovering the trust which is made in us by God, we can make a step into the unknown, not just leaning on a "reasonable" security. The Bible gives examples of this: Abraham (see Hebrews 11.8-9), the woman of Zarephath (1 Kings 17. 10-16). Jesus is present himself in situations of fear, danger and of suffering, and it is in reality towards him that we make a step, like Peter who walks on the water (Matthew 14.22-33).

Trusting means entering into a new relationship with the Father, it is is being able, like Christ, to commit oneself entirely to the love of the Father: "Your Father knows what you need. Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice and the rest will also be given to you." (Matthew 6.25-34).

- Which words and which attitudes of Christ in the Gospel help us to put put our trust in God?
- What does turning towards Christ and trusting him mean in my own situation?
- Who, among people we know, are an encouragement to trust?
- How can trust orient and support our decisions?
- How can we open a path of trust for others?

A PILGRIMAGE OF TRUST ON EARTH

The meetings in MADRAS and BARCELONA at the end of the year will form one single pilgrimage of trust on earth. Some very simple suggestions to begin to prepare oneself:

- Each day take a moment, even if it is short, to pray, to be in silence, to visit a church, or to meditate on a page of the Bible (see for example, the texts suggested in the LETTER FROM TAIZE).
- Participate at least once a week in the parish celebration, help with the preparation of the liturgy, have a regular time for prayer open to everyone in the parish church (see LETTER FROM THE DESERT, note 11).
- Discover steps to be made in your town or neighbourhood to foster trust: visit lonely people, the sick, foreigners; arrange for an icon to pass from place to place, family to family, from group to group, a chance to get to know one another better, to break isolation; involve children or old people in these initiatives (consider using the letters TO CHILDREN and TO THOSE WHO THINK THEY HAVE BEEN NOTHING).
- Look for signs of sharing and of solidarity in the human family LETTER FROM THE DESERT, notes 2, 3, 7); carry out the "prayer for trust on earth" for peace and justice (suggested plan LETTER FROM TAIZE, May-June).

It is essential that those come who come to Madras or Barcelona bring the witness of the life of their local communities. Little day-long or weekend meetings held from time to time in parishes or communities should make it possible to gather together experiences had by different people and to advance towards these meetings.

The European Meeting in Barcelona

Programme: participation in the life of the parishes and neighbourhoods of BARCELONA and surrounding region; prayer together twice a day; discussion groups. Possibility for those who wish to spend the five days in silence.

Registration: Send your form in before December 1st. Those hoping to organise a group to go the meeting are asked to let us know even if nothing is certain. Give an estimate of numbers before November 15th.

Arrival: Monday morning December 30 between 7 am and 12 noon (and not before, except for the work, animation and music teams).

Departure: Friday mid-afternoon January 3rd.

Age: at least 17 yrs. Young people under 17: only if accompanied by their family or a group leader.

Accommodation: with families, in church halls, or with religious communities. Essential to bring air-mattress and sleeping-bag. Separate dormitories for boys and girls.

Work teams, animators and musicians: (possibility restricted to those who are 17-30 years) Those who can help in these teams should arrive on Dec.28th, and indicate this on their registration forms. Working usually also allows participation in the life of the parishes.

Travel: People can get a group train ticket or hire a coach. (We cannot organise accommodation for coach drivers in Barcelona.) From London, special coaches depart morning Dec. 29 and return mid-afternoon Jan. 4. Return fares: Youth (up to 26 yrs): £65, Adult: £75. Harris Coaches, Manor Rd., West Thurrock, GRAYS, Essex RM16 1EH. Tel: (0708) 864911. Overnight accommodation in parishes in London available for those who wish.

REGISTRATION FORM to be filled in by all participants and sent, before 1st December (closing date) to: European Meeting, Taizé Community, 71250 CLUNY, France.

FIRST NAME :

FAMILY NAME :

ADDRESS :

(with post code and country)

Tel.: ...../..... Age: .....

Please circle "yes" or "no" to show which applies :

- I will make my own way to Barcelona — yes / no

otherwise: I will be joining the group going from the town of: ..... — yes / no

leader's name: .....

- I will arrive in BARCELONA December 30th — yes / no

I will arrive in BARCELONA December 28th

to participate in the teams for *(please circle):* Work Animation Music

- I receive the Letter from Taizé regularly — yes / no
- I would like .... additional forms (photocopy your own if possible)
- As I cannot sleep on the floor, I would like a bed — yes / no

If so, say whether you are *(please circle):*

woman man couple family with children disabled with helper

- To assist the reception, if you have already arranged your own accommodation, kindly state the address and the parish: .....

MADRAS 1985

"In the city of MADRAS, preparation for the meeting is being taken seriously. I took part in a meeting of sixty young people from different parishes of the city. There was an atmosphere of friendship and happiness, but at the same time an air of seriousness in the awareness of their responsibility for hosting the meeting. A lot of ground has been covered since October."

Throughout INDIA a few brothers of the community and several young Indians, Africans and Europeans are travelling, making visits and taking part in meetings.

In the states of the south, TAMIL-NADU and KERALA, it was possible to meet a lot of young Catholics and Protestants who will be going to MADRAS at the end of the year. Visits had already been made to BANGALORE, DELHI, POONA and BOMBAY.

In the faraway northern states of BENGAL and BIHAR several meetings led young people to wonder how they could participate in the "pilgrimage of trust on earth", even if they cannot all come to MADRAS. In a village near to CALCUTTA, young people of the city were welcomed by rural families to share their living conditions and reflect with them. A series of visits made in RANCHI culminated in a weeklong meeting which took place there:

Each day in RANCHI, we met groups of students or youth groups belonging to Catholic or Protestant parishes. Wherever we went, we had a time of prayer together, a time that took many different forms. Everywhere we went, we presented ourselves as pilgrims and it was as pilgrims that we were received. We came to share a little of what we understood of the light of Christ. We invited those present also to be pilgrims with us. In the Lutheran Church packed with children and young people, the prayer and discussion were centred on being people of light who can overcome

divisions, and who can follow Christ together. In one Catholic parish, we had a procession of the cross to express our desire to be always on the move.

The week ended with a celebration that lasted all afternoon. Starting off in the Protestant cathedral, there were prayers in different tribal languages for the people of RANCHI, for those who suffer, the sick, people who are out of work... and finally we gathered round the cross to commit to Christ the burdens of men and women both in INDIA and throughout the world. Then, a procession of 700 to 800 people, young and old, children and adults, set off to the parish half an hour's walk away. There the Gospel was read in several languages; each person lit a candle, a sign of our desire to bring the light of Christ into the reality of our daily situation, and finally all the candles were placed within a giant map of INDIA that had been drawn with chalk powder on the ground." □

Date: from Dec. 27, 1985 to Jan. 1, 1986.
Depending on the arrival and departure times that the airlines schedule, suggestions will be made to the participants for the few days before or after the meeting.

Registration before September 15, for Europeans and North Americans, by sending the pre-registration form below. You will then receive information giving the conditions of personal preparation for the meeting, and also practical information, in particular about the visa for entry into INDIA. You will hear through Taizé from which travel agent to buy your reduced-rate ticket, in your own country. On the other hand, those from Asia, Australasia, Africa and South America, should write directly to MADRAS in order to prepare and register for the meeting: Taizé Worldwide Pilgrimage, Post-Bag 5152, GOPALAPURAM P.O., MADRAS-600086.

Travel: the arrangements being made with the airline companies should make it possible to obtain an approximate return-fare of $500, from European capitals to MADRAS. The fare could be lower for those prepared to arrive in BOMBAY and travel to MADRAS by train (28 to 30 hours by train). To finance the journey, some will find a job, others will organise together paying for one of them to go, yet others still will try to set up a solidarity fund to help people, from Europe and other continents, who can pay only part of the air-fare, and whom we know at Taizé.

Cost of the meeting: This will include meals, accommodation, and a contribution to the overall costs (sound system, etc.). Everyone will contribute as they are able. In particular, those from Southern Europe will pay what they can and a slightly higher contribution will be asked of those from Northern Europe. Reckon on a contribution of between $4.50 and $7.00 per day. A more exact guideline price will be calculated later on.

REGISTRATION FORM, to be sent to : MEETINGS, TAIZÉ COMMUNITY, 71250 CLUNY, FRANCE

FIRST NAME :

FAMILY NAME :

ADDRESS :

(with post code and country)

Tel.: ...../..... Age : .....

I intend to take part in the Madras meeting.

At Taizé, I am in contact with:

1 If anyone speaks, it should be as one aking the very words of God ; if anyone ves let them do it with the strength God vides, so that in all things God may be ised through Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 49.18-21 ●*1 Peter 4.7-11* ●Luke 9.23-27

2 The Lord has given me a disciple's gue, so that I may know how to comfort one who is exhausted. Every morning, he ens my ear so that I may listen as a disciple.

Is 50.4-7 ●1 Pet 4.12-14 ●Lk 9.37-45

3 Whoever reveres the Lord, and listens the voice of his servant, whoever has ked in the darkest night unable to see a nmer of light, can trust in the name of the d and rest upon his God.

Is 50.8-10 ●Lk 9.46-50

hese short readings, taken from the midday rayer in Taizé, can be read several times dur- g the day. The references indicate longer adings. If you have time to read only one, the nderlined one is suggested. The reference in alics shows the source of the short reading.

N 4 Let yourselves be renewed by the nsformation of your judgment, to put on the v self, created to be like God, in justice and oliness.

odus 16.2-4,12-15 ●*Ephesians 4.17,20-24* ●John 6.24-35

n 5 The Lord says: Do not fear the eats of men, do not be frightened by their deeds. Those whom I have freed will re- n with singing, radiant with an everlasting

Is 51.4-7,11 ●1 Pet 5.1-5 ●Lk 9.51-62

e 6 TRANSFIGURATION

ou do well to pay attention to the word of prophets, as to a light shining in a dark ce, until the day dawns and the morning rises in your hearts.

Daniel 7.9-10,13-14 ●*2 Peter 1.16-19* ●Mark 9.2-10

Wed 7 Resist the tempter, firm in faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are enduring the same kind of suffering.

Is 51.12-16 ●*1 Pet 5.6-11* ●Lk 10.1-3

Thu 8 I am confident that the One who has begun a good work in you will carry it on to completion, to the day of Christ Jesus.

Is 52.7-10 ●*Philippians 1.1-6* ●Lk 10.4-11,16

Fri 9 Paul wrote: I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best.

Is 52.13-15 ●*Ph 1.7-11* ●Lk 10.17-22

Sat 10 Turning to his disciples, Jesus said: Blessed are the eyes that see what you see !

Is 53.1-5 ●*Lk 10.23-28*

SUN 11 Jesus said: It is written in the prophets, "They will all be taught by God." Everyone who listens to the Father, and learns from him, comes to me.

1 Kings 19.4-8 ●Eph 4.30-5.2 ●*Jn 6.41-51*

Mon 12 Having told the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asked the teacher of the law, "Who showed himself to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers ?" He replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Is 53.6-9 ●Ph 1.12-19 ●*Lk 10.29-37*

Tue 13 What the Lord wills, will be accomplished through his servant. After all his suffering, he will see the light and be content.

Is 53.10-12 ●Ph 1.20-26 ●Lk 10.38-42

Wed 14 Stand firm in one spirit, strive together for the faith of the Gospel.

Is 54.1-6 ●*Ph 1.27-30* ●Lk 11.1-4

Thu 15 MARY, MOTHER OF THE LORD

Mary said:The mercy of the Lord stretches from age to age upon those who revere him. He has filled the hungry with good things and has sent the rich away, empty-handed.

Zephaniah 3.14-18a ●1 Cor 15.20-26 ●*Lk 1.39-56*

Fri 16 Jesus said: Ask, and it will be given to you ; seek and you will find ; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Is 54.7-8,10 ●Ph 2.1-4 ●*Lk 11.5-13*

Sat 17 The Lord says to his people: You will be founded in justice, free from tyranny. You will have nothing to fear: terror will be removed, it will have no power over you.

Is 54.11-14 ●Lk 11.14-20

SUN 18 Seek the fullness given by the Spirit. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord.

Proverbs 9.1-6 ●*Eph 5.15-20* ●Jn 6.51-58

Mon 19 Having become a human being like others, Christ Jesus humbled himself even to the point of accepting death on a cross. Therefore God raised him high, giving him the name which is above every other name.

Is 55.1-3 ●*Ph 2.5-11* ●Lk 11.23,27-28

Tue 20 Jesus said: No-one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, but instead they put it on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in.

Is 55.6-9 ●Ph 2.12-18 ●*Lk 11.33-36*

Wed 21 The Lord says: Just as the rain and snow come down from the sky and do not return before having watered the earth, and making it fertile so that it yields grain to the sower and bread for the eater, so is the word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me without having accomplishd its purpose.

Is 55.10-13 ●Ph 3.1a,3b-7 ●Lk 12.1-4,6-7

Thu 22 For Christ, I have been willing to lose everything ; I consider everything as rubbish, compared with the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ, and being in him, not with a perfection of my own, but with the justice that comes from faith in Christ, and which is of God.

Deut 4.12,29-31 ●*Ph 3.8-9* ●Lk 12.8,11-12

Fri 23 Paul wrote: I do not pretend to be already perfect, but I forget what is past and strain ahead towards what is to come, running towards the goal to which God has called me.

Dt 4.33-39 ●*Ph 3.10-16* ●Lk 12.13-21

Sat 24 Jesus said: Do not be anxious about your life. Who among you can, by worrying about it, add a minute to the length of his life ? If then, even this tiny thing is beyond your power, why worry about the rest ?

Dt 6.4-9 ●*Lk 12.22-26*

SUN 25 Jesus said: The Spirit gives life. The flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

Joshua 24.1...18 ●Eph 5.25-32 ●*Jn 6.60-69*

Mon 26 Moses told the people: God has set his heart on you and chosen you not because you are more numerous than other peoples, but rather it is out of love for you and to keep the promise that he made to your fathers, that the Lord has delivered you from slavery.

Dt 7.7-9 ●Ph 3.17-4.1 ●Lk 12.27-31

Tue 27 Jesus said: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Dt 8.2-3,12-15 ●Ph 4.4-7 ●*Lk 12.32-34*

Wed 28 Be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet in order to be able to open the door for him immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are the servants whom the master finds waitng for him, when he comes !

Dt 10.12-19 ●Ph 4.8-14 ●*Lk 12.35-44*

Thu 29 Jesus said: I have come to bring a fire to the earth, and how I wish that it were blazing already !

Dt 15.7-11 ●1 Jn 1.1-4 ●*Lk 12.49-50,54-56*

Fri 30 The word is very near you ; on your lips and in your heart so that you may carry it out.

Dt 30.11-14 ●1 Jn 1.5-7 ●Lk 13.6-9

Sat 31 Choose life ; loving the Lord your God, listening to his voice, holding fast to him, for in this your life consists.

Dt 30.19-20a ●Lk 13.10-17

OSPEL OF SAINT LUKE (9.23 - 13.17)

The chapters of Luke's Gospel proposed for the month of August gin with an important turning point in the life of Jesus: he "the Christ God" (9.20), will show the love of the Father to the extent of suffering d death (9.22,44). He "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (9.51). Luke mphasizes this in order to show that all the words to follow draw their ength from the passion and resurrection of Christ. By the gift of his , the words of Christ become a fire on the earth (12.49).

This fire purifies everything. The false security sought in material alth (12.33-34), or in belonging to a particular people (10.29-37), or the purely exterior observation of the law (11.37-54) - none of that rvives. The poor with no security, the people who are always present Jesus' path, they are the joyful ones (13.17). But there are people o harden their hearts and who oppose Jesus "fiercely" (11.53). Few e really prepared to follow him. To them, Jesus taught prayer as inti- ate communion with the Father (11.1-13 ; 12.22-32) which leads to getting oneself (9.23-26).

The disciples also need to be purified by fire, to stop discussing ong themselves who would be the greatest (9.46-48) ; to understand t Jesus also has to go to foreigners (9.51-56) ; to be less glad about ir success than knowing that "their names are written in heaven" .20) ; to put their trust in the Holy Spirit when they are brought before urts because of their faith (12.12). And Jesus includes them in his ssion: "Whoever listens to you, listens to me" (10.1-16). He is filled h joy (10.21), for this flock which is still small, (12.32) and yet is also e seed from which the Church will grow.

September

SUN 1 Be ready to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry ; for man's anger does not fulfil the justice of God.

Deuteronomy 4.1-8 ● *James 1.17-27* ● Mark 7.14-23

Mon 2 Jesus said: The Kingdom of God is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it all rose.

Dt 31.6-8 ● 1 John 1.8-2.2 ● *Luke 13.18-21*

Tue 3 I waited on the Lord with a great hope, and he listened to my cry for help. He has put a new song in my mouth: a hymn of praise to our God.

Psalm 40 ● Dt 32.1-4 ● 1 Jn 2.3-8 ● Lk 13.22,31-35

Wed 4 Whoever loves his brother is living in the light, and need not be afraid of stumbling.

Dt 32.10-12 ● *1 Jn 2.9-11* ● Lk 14.1-6

Thu 5 The world will pass away, but the one who does the will of God will remain for ever.

Jeremiah 30.12-13,17-19 ● *1 Jn 2.12-17* ● Lk 14.7-11

Fri 6 Let what you heard in the beginning remain within you. And so you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

Jr 31.3-6 ● *1 Jn 2.20-27* ● Lk 14.12-14

Sat 7 The Lord says: I shall lead them to streams of water by a level path where they will not stumble ; for I am a Father for my people. *Jr 31.8-9* ● Lk 14.15-23

SUN 8 The Lord says: The lame will leap like deer, and the tongues of the dumb will shout for joy, for springs of water will well up in the desert and the burning sand become a pool. *Isaiah 35.4-7* ● James 2.1-5 ● Mk 7.31-37

Mon 9 John wrote: You know that God is righteous, then you must recognise that everyone whose life is righteous has been born of him. Jr 31.11-13 ● *1 Jn 2.29-3.5* ● Lk 14.25-33

Tue 10 The Lord says: My people is so dear a son to me that each time that I speak of him I am deeply moved. That is why my heart overflows for him.

Jr 31.15-20 ● 1 Jn 3.13-14,16-18 ● Lk 14.34-35

Wed 11 Should our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything. Jr 31.23-25 ● *1 Jn 3.19-24* ● Lk 15.1-10

Thu 12 The Lord says: I will put my Law deep within them, I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Jr 31.31-34 ● 1 Jn 4.1-4 ● Lk 15.11-24

Fri 13 Let us love each other, for love is of God and whoever loves is born of God and knows God. Jr 32.38-41 ● *1 Jn 4.7-9* ● Lk 15.25-32

Sat 14 The Lord says: Call me and I will answer you, and tell you great and unsearchable things of which you know nothing.

Jr 33.2-3,6-8 ● Lk 16.10-13,16

SUN 15 Jesus asked his disciples, "For you, who am I ?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Is 50.5-9 ● James 2.14-18 ● *Mk 8.27-35*

Mon 16 Jesus said: If your brother sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, "I repent," then forgive him.

Jr 33.14-16 ● 1 Jn 4.10-16 ● *Lk 17.3-6*

THE FIRST LETTER OF SAINT JOHN

"God is love" (4.16): for John the entire message of the New Test ment is summed up in these words. So, he writes to Christian threatened by divisions, you should love one another (4.7). And Joh opens a path of communion for them (1.3 ; 1.7). He shows that love God and love of our neighbour are not two separate commandment Recognising the deep connection between them means placing on self in the light (2.8) and in the truth (2.21). Truth consists first of all the fact that God "loved us first" (4.19).

John gives this testimony that he saw, touched and heard th Word of life. He transmits that life to us (1.1-4 and 5.13). The Spirit God already lives in us (4.13), and through it we are children of Go (3.2), born of God (5.1). The commandment of love is no longer burde some either (5.3), but the fruit of faith. Love of one's neighbour b comes a visible expression of the mystery of God. We cannot gras this mystery in all its depth. But by "loving truly, in deeds" (3.18) we a gradually introduced to it.

Those who love, expose themselves to the evil in the world (4. 5.19), and hatred (3.13) ; they also go through the bitter experience their own weakness, and their sin (1.8-2.2). So their trust in God has be deepened in the certainty of the forgiveness of Christ (2.1 ; 2.1 and of his victory over evil (4.4 ; 5.3-5). And when adversity becom even more subtle, when our heart itself condemns us, John sugges this final way of overcoming: putting our heart at rest before God wh is greater than our heart and who knows everything (3.18-22). In th total giving of self, fear gives way to trust and to love (4.18).

Tue 17 There is no fear in love ; but perfect love drives out fear.

Ecclesiastes 3.9-11,13 ● *1 Jn 4.17-21* ● Lk 17.7-10

Wed 18 To the Samaritan who returned to thank Jesus for healing him, Jesus said: Rise and go ; your faith has saved you.

Ecclesiastes 7.8-10,9.7-8 ● 1 Jn 5.1-4 ● *Lk 17.11-19*

Thu 19 Jesus said: The coming of the Kingdom of God can not be observed, and no one will say, "Here it is !" or "There it is !" for the Kingdom of God is among you.

Numbers 6.22-26 ● 1 Jn 5.5-11 ● *Lk 17.20-25*

Fri 20 Test me, O Lord, and sound me, examine my heart and my mind ; for your love is ever before me, and I walk in your truth.

Psalm 26 ● Nb 11.24-29 ● 1 Jn 5.13-15 ● Lk 18.1-8

Sat 21 ST MATTHEW, APOSTLE

Jesus said: I desire mercy not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Ephesians 4.7-13 ● *Matthew 9.9-13*

SUN 22 Jesus said: Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me ; and whoever welcomes me is not welcoming me but the one who sent me.

Is 55.6-9 ● James 3.13,16-18 ● *Mk 9.30-37*

Mon 23 God has chosen us, in Christ, before the creation of the world, to be holy and spotless and to live in his presence in love.

Nb 12.1-8 ● *Eph 1.1-6* ● Lk 18.9-14

Tue 24 Jesus said: Anyone who will not ceive the Kingdom of God like a little child never enter it. Nb 23.7-12 ● Eph 1.7-10 ● *Lk 18.15*

Wed 25 Jesus said to a man: You still l one thing. Sell everything you have and giv to the poor, and you will have a treasure heaven. Then come and follow me.

Nehemiah 1.7-10 ● Eph 1.11-14 ● *Lk 18.18*

Thu 26 Do not be sad and afflicted, for joy of the Lord is your strength.

Ne 8.8-10 ● Eph 1.15-19 ● Lk 18.28

Fri 27 Because of your great compass Lord, you did not abandon your people in desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cea to guide them, nor the pillar of fire by nigh lighten their way.

Ne 9.17-19 ● Eph 1.20-23 ● Lk 18.3

Sat 28 The compassion of the Lord is n each day ; great is his faithfulness. It is g to wait in silence for the salvation of the L

Lamentations 3.22-26 ● Lk 19.

SUN 29 Jesus said: Whoever gives yo cup of water because you belong to me truth I tell you, they will not lack their rewa

Numbers 11.25-29 ● Acts 4.32-35 ● *Mk 9.3*

Mon 30 It is by grace that you have b saved, through faith. And this salvation d not come from you, it is the gift of God.

Lm 3.55-58 ● *Eph 2.4-10* ● Lk 19.2

A yes for an entire lifetime

e "Letter from the Desert" ends with a call dare to say yes for an entire lifetime to fol- v Christ: whether this be the yes to the elity of marriage or the yes to a vocation of ibacy. Here are the thoughts of three aniards, a young couple and a boy who is eparing to be a priest.

ust of heart

"As we were married just two and a half years o, perhaps we do not yet know all the difficulties life together. Nevertheless we know that only st of heart makes a yes for our whole lives possi- . That trust is the fountain where love wells up. It he spring from which forgiveness flows.

Both our lives have always rotated around two es: hospitality and fellowship in the Church. And yer has always been the support for that.

It is possible to arrange a home, even if it is very all, in a way that is welcoming enough to offer a itor the warmth and the affection of a family. It is ssible to arrange a corner or a room for prayer to- her, very simply: all you need is an icon, a candle d some flowers. Even if we are welcoming visitors friends who are not believers, just the sight of an n witnesses very discretely to the presence of other love which dwells in our family in a hidden y.

Work also plays an important part in our life. h of us have been able to choose our own, which a great blessing. Mari Carmen looks after the se. She does it in such a way that it is constantly n to the neighbours and to friends. Looking after two children and managing the house, far from ng frustrating, is a chance for her to communicate nething of the love that the Father has placed in to the children and to those who come.

Until recently Jorge was part of the pastoral m at the university, organising meetings, visiting ishes and groups, helping to weave a communion he Church of Madrid. For several months he has n looking after children in the streets who have n turned out of school and who have no work. y come from very poor neighbourhoods. Perhaps most important thing is to show them affection to teach them a skill. If only one day they may cover that despite being wounded and torn, they also filled with love!

Whenever possible we visit other groups, either alone or with children. We do not just want to receive people in our home but also to share what others experience in their own homes, groups and parishes. That gives courage, forms ties and builds up the Church. It is also a blessing to meet together every Friday with a group to pray together and to share a meal. Through them, a freshness works its way into our home.

Fidelity to our yes, lived in trust, is not a burden on our shoulders but the consequence of the love which the Father has placed in us. During these two and a half years, we have discovered that this love makes it possible for us to live in forgiveness. Asking for forgiveness, when we get embroiled in endless discussions, even if we think we are right, means breaking the wall which words can raise between two hearts.

Saying yes for a whole lifetime is throwing yourself into adventure - the folly of God's love. Little by little, through prayer and through contact with human suffering, our heart prepared itself for a definitive yes. This yes does not break or tear our being. Christ repeats in us, "do not fear, I am here", and the yes which is renewed at every moment is transformed into an unexpected source of joy, into a continuous song of praise."

Pilgrim of reconciliation

"Being a pilgrim of reconciliation is an expression that I learnt in Taizé. It corresponds well with the intuition that I have myself about the meaning of a Christian commitment.

I want to become a priest and for me that is a way of living a parable of reconciliation: living it, if necessary, even amid the rift between clergy and laity, between "committed" believers and "everyday" believers.

Being a pilgrim in a life of silence in order to build paths along which the Church can become what she is in her depths.

Being a pilgrim at Vallodolid to help to bring to life things that are only just sensed in very weak forms: setting up youth groups, arranging times of silence, acting for justice and peace, studying theology, arranging prayer gatherings, constantly looking for what is already given, even if it is still being waited for." □

UGANDA

■ Several brothers of the community live in a poor neighbourhood of Nairobi, Kenya. They were invited, with some of their neighbours, to go and spend a week in Uganda, in a poor part of the city of Jinja to lead a reflection on reconciliation:

"Jinja is the principal industrial city of Uganda, but most of the factories are badly delapidated. It is a splendid setting, on the banks of Lake Victoria, at the point where the Nile makes its course towards the north.

The welcome in Walukuba, the large poor neighbourhood where most of the workers live, was so generous that we had to move almost each night to avoid causing jealousy. In this neighbourhood there are two parishes, one Catholic and one Anglican. Both took part in the meeting. From the first evening, common prayer alternated between both churches.

Throughout the week we carefully prepared the prayer around the cross which was to take place on Friday evening. And then on Thursday night, totally spontaneously, the government decreed that the next day would be a holiday. We thought that as a result nobody would come on the Friday night, but instead several hundred young people gathered. And with them came old people, and some handicapped and lepers who went towards the cross on their stumps or crutches like in the Gospel.

On Saturday, at the end of the afternoon, the field which surrounds the Anglican church was covered with little groups of women, young people and old people. A few hundred children were milling around and playing football around the groups. Everybody emphasised the importance of the arrival of young people from a poor neighbourhood of Nairobi.

Towards 11 pm everyone set off on a night procession. I must say that in Jinja night security is not too bad. Everyone held their candle or their lantern and walked behind the cross which was crossing the whole neighbourhood. The chants alternated with hymns in Luganda. Passers-by did not just pass by! Once we arrived at the Catholic parish there was no question of splitting up, for it would have been too dangerous to go home in the middle of the night. So we kept watch for the whole night around the cross and the icon of the resurrection. Little by little the children fell asleep, and some old people too, but the majority of the adults and the young people held out well.

Early in the morning we all set off on the last stage of the pilgrimage. In Jinja, as everywhere in Uganda, there are two cathedrals, and they are perched on two hills. Still behind the cross, and in dust and a very hot sun, the little crowd nimbly climbed the first hill, drawn on by the untiring children. The welcome at the Catholic cathedral for Mass was magnificent, the bishop was very welcoming. We prayed, and sang "Jubilate Deo" and then we all pushed down the slope through the banana trees and the manioc gardens. The dusty crowd arrived after a long walk at the door of the Anglican cathedral. There too we were well welcomed, with the bare-footed, sweaty children installed on fine red cushions. The Anglican bishop was delighted with everything.

The good news was really proclaimed by the poor that day. In Uganda. In 1985."

GERMANY

■ In the region of Cologne, continuing the pilgrimage after the European meeting does not mean creating a desire for new things. The desire of those who welcomed the European Meeting is more to let what they have experienced take root. Young people and families in many parishes have decided to participate regularly in a common prayer in their church where all the generations are invited. In some parishes, for example, the older people asked that from now on a time for prayer prolong the usual Sunday celebration.

Being rooted in prayer and in the parish go hand in hand with a search for openness, asking, "How can we go out to meet the most isolated, or those who do not come to church?" Someone explains:

"We went to the hospital with some young people from the Spanish parish in Bonn to visit five young men who had arrived in Germany some months before from El Salvador. They were all in bad shape and they told us something about their own lives. They told us about the situation in their country, how they had lost their families, that there are people dying because they do not have the basics. They explained to us the tragedy which an open war between people of the same country is. We hesitated to speak of reconciliation to young people who have been struggling to defend their families or their neighbours since the age of fifteen and who, at twenty, are mutilated and have lost their loved ones. That was why we were all amazed when at the moment that we were about to leave, one of them said to us, "pray for our country, that everything will quieten down soon, ask God to remember those who are struggling on both sides."

After the European Meeting, in Cologne itself, young people were asked to keep up daily prayer in one of the Romanesque churches in the city-centre. It takes place late-afternoon, and each day a group comes from a different parish to lead it.

POLAND

■ "We travelled around Poland for two weeks to prepare meetings. We were impressed by the vitality and the creativity of the parishes. Some young Poles were with us all the time and helped us to see what is essential to them in their everyday life.

There are some signs and gestures in this country which, in a very simple way, remind us continually of a presence. People often bless themselves as they pass a church. It is not unusual to see a picture of the Virgin of Czestochowa in a bus-driver's cabin. For the young people who came with us, each church that we passed along the way became, in a very natural way, a chance to sing or to stay in silence together.

Some young people said to us before we left, "Do not leave Poland without praying before the Virgin of Czestochowa". Going there brings you into communion with the hope of an entire people. "It is the land of freedom," a young person told us. We prayed the rosary and sang together before the icon of the black Virgin until morning. The Eucharist and a long meditation on the way of the cross were at t heart of that vigil.

In Poland one feels a unity betwe everyone, old people, the young, religio and it is profoundly rooted in the faith. Tra tion is loved. We were struck by the sense the Church that many young people ha One of them said to us, "We understand t mysteries of God so little that it is essential us to lean on the Church; in its sacraments its prayers, it is like an awareness which h understood for us what we do not und stand."

CHILE

■ "I work in the pastoral service for yo of my region. It is difficult, but also wonder The situation of the Church and especially lay-people is not easy. In our country som thing can happen at any moment. Murde disappearances and other unexplained eve abound. Our youth is completely disori tated and that provokes an apathy or indiff ence in some young people that see beyond all hope. Anything you do in yo pastoral work is thus very fragile and affect by uncertainty, but nevertheless a lot of w on developing communion and unity has ready been done.

The recent earthquake came on top of this. In our country you never know how ture is going to react. A volcano in the so has been threatening to erupt for the last months. It seems incredible that the cour be the victim of this seismic action with all t it already has to put up with in other spher

I ask you to pray a lot for Chile, above for the poorest because it is they who are s fering the most."

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